

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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SUBJECT: FRENCH MEDIA REACTION TO ALLEGEDLY OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT OF DATES AND ITINERARY OF PRESIDENT'S TRIP TO EUROPE.

REF: STATE 164636

SUMMARY: FRENCH PRESS HAS GIVEN EXTENSIVE COVERAGE TO AUGUST 17 REPORTS FROM WASHINGTON THAT PRESIDENT WILL VISIT MAJOR EUROPEAN CAPITALS LATE OCTOBER/EARLY NOVEMBER. ALMOST ALL NEWSPAPERS CITE U.S. OFFICIAL SOURCES FOR STORY. FRENCH PRESS APPARENTLY UNAWARE OF WHITE HOUSE PRESS SPOKESMAN'S AUGUST 17 STATEMENT DENYING THAT TIMING AND ITINERARY PRESIDENT'S EUROPEAN TRIP FIRM. END SUMMARY.

1. FRENCH PRESS OVER WEEKEND AND MONDAY GAVE EXTENSIVE COVERAGE TO AUGUST 17 WASHINGTON-DATELINE REPORTS THAT PRESIDENT WILL MAKE 2-WEEK VISIT TO MAJOR EUROPEAN CAPITALS LATE OCTOBER/EARLY NOVEMBER. SOTRY IS FRONTPAGED IN L E MONDE AND COMBAT, EARLY INSIDE PAGES IN OTHER MAJOR PARIS DAILIES. ALMOST ALL PAPERS CITED OFFICIAL SOURCES, MOST OFTEN THE WHITE HOUSE (FIGARO, AURORE, COMBAT) OR THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE (LES ECHOS, LE MONDE). MOST PRESS ACCOUNTS ALSO INCORPORATE COMPANION STORY THAT U.S. CIRCULATING AMONG WESTERN EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS DRAFT OF "DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES" FOR NEW ATLANTIC PARTNERSHIP. SEVERAL PAPERS RELATED TIMING OF "ANNOUNCEMENT" TO PRESENT EVOLUTION
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WATERGATE AFFAIR, SOMETIMES NOTING THAT "PREMATURE" RELEASE

CAUGHT SOME EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS BY SURPRISE. FRENCH PRESS HAS

MADE NO REFERENCE TO, OR SHOWN ANY AWARENESS OF, STATEMENT BY
WHITE HOUSE SPOKESMAN AUGUST 17 (REFTEL) DENYING THAT FIRM
TIMING OR ITINERARY PRESIDENT'S EUROPEAN TRIP HAS BEEN SET.
POST HAS NOTED NO TELEVISION REFERENCE TO THE STORY. SELECTED
BLOCK QUOTES FOLLOW.

2. FIGARO, AUGUST 18 (J. JACQUET FRANCILLON FROM WASHINGTON):
"DECIDING THAT THE WATERGATE SCANDAL HAS LASTED LONG ENOUGH,
PRESIDENT NIXON IS PREPARING HIS UPCOMING TRIP TO EUROPE... HE
WON'T SPEAK OF WATERGATE ANY MORE. HE WILL SPEAK OF AFFAIRS
OF STATE AND OF WORLD AFFAIRS... WELL-INFORMED SOURCES DO NOT
CONCEAL THAT PRESIDENT NIXON IS STILL HOPING THAT THE DECLARATION OF
PRINCIPLES ON A REFORMULATION OF THE ATLANTIC PARTNERSHIP
CAN BE SIGNED BY THE UNITED STATES AND THE COUNTRIES OF THE EUROPE
OF THE NINE, EITHER AT THE FOREIGN MINISTER LEVEL OR EVEN AT THE
HEADS OF GOVERNMENT LEVEL ON THE OCCASION OF HIS COMING VISIT TO
EUROPE. THE WORDS 'NEW ATLANTIC CHARTER' USED BY KISSINGER IN HIS
WALDORF ASTORIA SPEECH ARE NO LONGER USED HERE. BUT THIS IS PROBABLY
JUST A TACTIC INTENDED TO ALLAY THE RETICENCES OF SOME EUROPEAN
COUNTRIES, FRANCE IN THE FIRST INSTANCE."

3. COMBAT, AUGUST 20 (EDITORIAL): "IT WAS UNDOUBTDELY PREMATURE FOR
NIXON TO LET IT BE ANNOUNCED FRIDAY NIGHT THAT HIS FIFTEEN-
DAY TRIP TO EUROPE WOULD TAKE PLACE LATE IN OCTOBER OR EARLY
IN NOVEMBER... THE U.S. CHIEF EXECUTIVE IS AWARE THAT DIPLOMATIC
PREPARATIONS FOR HIS EUROPEAN VISIT ARE NOT COMPLETED; HE HAS SENT
HIS ALLIES A NEW DOCUMENT AMENDING HIS ATLANTIC PROPOSALS OF LAST
SPRING, BUT THE EUROPEANS ARE STILL STUDYING THAT TEXT. FRANCE IN
ANY CASE IF FIRMLY OPPOSED TO A RENOVATION OF ATLANTIC ALLIANCE
STRUCTURES AND TO A EUROPEAN SUMMIT TO CLIMAX NIXON'S VISIT. AS
FOR THE ASSOCIATION OF JAPAN WITH EUROPE, IT CONTINUES TO GIVE
RISE TO SKEPTICISM IN EUROPE. WHATEVER THEIR DIFFERENCES, THE
EUROPEANS WILL REACT IN THE SAME MANNER TO THE OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT
OF A TRIP WHICH APPEARS TO BE A DIVERSIONARY MANEUVER BEING TRIED
OUT BY THE WHITE HOUSE ON AN AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION OVERLY
INTERESTED IN THE WATERGATE AFFAIR. AMERICA'S ALLIES ARE CERTAINLY
NOT WILLING TO SERVE MR. NIXON'S DOMESTIC POLITICAL INTERESTS.
AND THEY WILL FIND IT DIFFICULT TO DISCERN THE EXPRESSION OF A
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GENUINE NEW EUROPEAN DYNAMISM IN THE ATLANTIC SUGGESTIONS OF WAS-
HINGTON. "THE YEAR OF EUROPE" APPEARS TOO CLEARLY TO BE JUST AN
APPENDAGE TO THE "YEAR OF CHINA AND THE USSR. MR. NIXON'S
EUROPEAN POLICY IS NOT PROMPTED BY A SPECIFIC, SUPERIOR PURPOSE
TO WHICH HIS OTHER PLANS WOULD GRAFT. EUROPE HAS FOR YEARS RANKED
BEHIND SOUTHEAST ASIA. EVEN BEFORE THE INDOCHINA CONFLICT WAS ENDED,
EUROPE WAS SUPERSEDED BY THE USSR AMONG AMERICAN PRIORITIES.
NIXON IS NOT SUCCEEDING IN DISGUISING THE SECONDARY ROLE HE ASSIGNE

EUROPE BECAUSE OF THE IMPORTANCE HE MUST ATTACH TO THE DIALOGUE
WITH MOSCOW. THE CONVERSATIONS HE WILL HAVE IN PARIS AND ELSEWHERE
TOW MONTHS FROM NOW WILL THUS BE DOMINATED BY THE SUSPICION THAT
HE IS TRYING TO
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MOULD ATLANTIC RELATIONS TO SUIT THE PROMISES HE MADE TO
BREZHNEV. THE SOVIET-AMERICAN SUMMIT WILL WEIGH HEAVILY ON NIXON'S
EUROPEAN DISCUSSIONS: HIS ATLANTIC POLICY IS JUST THE CODA OF
THE TUNE HE IS GRINDING OUT FOR THE KREMLIN...IN ITS HASTE TO WIN
OVER COMMUNIST HEARTS, THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION HAS MADE A LOT
OF BLUNDERS ABOUT WHICH, JAPAN FIRST, AND THE EUROPEAN ALLIES
NEXT, HAVE NOT GOTTEN OVER THEIR INDIGNATION. KISSINGER, WHO
IS PRESENTED AS A SPIRITUAL HEIR OF METTERNICH, MOREOVER APPEARS
TO HAVE SOME DIFFICULTIES IN UNDERSTANDING THE EUROPEAN VIEWPOINT.
IT IS SIGNIFICANT THAT WASHINGTON IS STILL INCLUDING FRANCE
IN THE CATEGORY OF NUISANCES, WITHOUT MAKING AN EFFORT TO UNDERSTAND
HER DIPLOMATIC POSITIONS. MR. KISSINGER WILL COME TO EUROPE NEXT
MONTH TO TRY TO BECOME IMBUED WITH THE OPPOSITION'S VIEWPOINT.
HE THUS HAS A LONG WAY TO GO. WOULDN'T IT HAVE BEEN PREFERABLE
UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES TO CHRISTEN 1974 'THE YEAR OF EUROPE'?"

4. FRANCE-SOIR, AUGUST 20(J.J. SIMONNEAU): "THE CESSATION
OF US BOMBINGS IN CAMBODIA HAVING OFFICIALLY ENDED AMERICAN
INVOLVEMENT IN INDOCHINA, AND HIS TV SPEECH WEDNESDAY HAVING,
IN HIS EYES, RECONCILED HIM WITH PUBLIC OPINION, PRESIDENT NIXON
FEELS HE HAS A FREE HAND TO CONCENTRATE AGAIN ON MAJOR
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS... AS EARLY AS FRIDAY, WASHINGTON CONFIRMED

THAT NIXON WILL VISIT WESTERN EUROPE, PROBABLY IN NOVEMBER.
BUT IT WAS SPECIFIED THAT HIS TRIP--WHICH IS TO LAST FOR ABOUT
TWO WEEKS WITH STOPOVERS IN PARIS, LONDON, BONN, ROME, BRUSSELS
AND PERHAPS ONE OR TWO OTHER CAPIALS-- MIGHT BE DELAYED TO PERMIT
AN AGREEMENT TO BE REACHED ON THE 'NEW ATLANTIC CHARTER' HE
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IS EXPECTING TO SIGN WITH HIS EUROPEAN ALLIES.THIS PROJECT,
LAUNCHED BY KISSINGER LAST APRIL, HAD GIVEN RISE TO SOME EMOTION.
AS A MATTER OF FACT, KISSINGER HAD CONTRASTED THE 'REGIONAL'
RESPONSIBILITIES OF WESTERN EUROPE WITH THE 'WORLD-WIDE'
RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE UNITED STATES AND HE HAS EMPHASITICALLY
LINKED AMERICAN MILITARY PRESENCE WITH EUROPEAN FLEXIBILITY TOWARD
US ECONOMIC INTERESTS. KISSINGER HAS SUBSEQUENTLY TRIED TO DISPEL
THESE ALARMS. HE WILL HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO FURNISH OTHER DETAILS
WHEN HE COMES TO BRUSSELS ON A SCOUTING MISSION NEXT MONTH.
ANYWAY, THE US PRESIDENT WANTS TO ESTABLISH NEW
RELATIONSHIPS WITH WESTERN EUROPE BEFORE PURSUING THE DIALOGUE
WITH MOSCOW, CURRENTLY THE SOURCE OF ALARMING PIECES OF NEWS."

5. AURORE, AUGUST 18, 1973: "THE WHITE HOUSE CONFIRMED YESTERDAY
THAT AT THE END OF OCTOBER AND THE BEGINNING OF NOVEMBER PRESIDENT
NIXON WILL MAKE A TOUR OF THE PRINCIPAL EUROPEAN CAPITALS
INCLUDING PARIS, LONDON, BONN, ROME AND BRUSSELS. THE COOL
REACTION OF THE EUROPEANS TO THE PLAN TO RESTRUCTURE THE ATLANTIC
ALLIANCE, PRESENTED BY THE PRESIDENT'S ADVISOR HENRY KISSINGER,
HAD LEFT THE IMPRESSION THAT THE SITUATION WAS NOT RIPE AND THAT
RICHARD NIXON WOULD HAVE TO POSTPONE THIS 'YEAR OF EUROPE'
THAT HE HAD PROCLAIMED IN LAUNCHING HIS SECOND PRESIDENTIAL TERM.
ALL THE MORE SO SINCE PARIS HAS DONE EVERYTING TO PREVENT THE
MULTILATERAL SUMMIT MEETING WHICH IN PRESIDENT NIXON'S EYES WAS
TO SOLEMNLY SEAL THE NEW ATLANTIC CHARTER. THE ELYSEE, WHICH
SEES IN THIS A TACTIC BY WASHINGTON TO MUFFLE THE VOICE OF
EUROPE AT A TIME WHEN AMERICAN AND RUSSIANS ARE DECIDING BILA-
TERALLY THE FATE OF THE WORLD, HAS EVEN TRIED TO PREVENT
ITS EUROPEAN COMMUNITY PARTNERS FROM PARTICIPATING IN THE DRAWING
UP OF A COMMON DECLARATION OF THE COUNTRIES OF THE ATLANTIC ALLIANCE.
DESPITE THAT, MR. NIXON HAS DECIDED TO GO FORWARD... STRENGTHENED
BY THE SUPPORT OF GERMANY, WHICH IS CONTRIBUTING ACTIVELY TO
THE PREPARATION OF THE NEW DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES
AND PERSUADED THAT THE OTHER ALLIES WOULD NOT WANT TO CONFRONT
THE U.S. DIRECTLY AND WILL THUS TEMPER THE INTRANSIGENCE
OF FRANCE, MR. NIXON HAS DECIDED TO CHANGE NOTHING IN HIS
INITIAL PLANS."STONE

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